

## Ginseng- *Panax quinquefolium* L.

### **Grower and Dealer Licensing Guide Lines**

Throughout North America the root of wild ginseng - *Panax quinquefolium* L. has been a long sought after commodity, which is collected and sold as an herbal remedy. It was first used in traditional Chinese medicine as an "imperial" herb because of its non-toxic and rejuvenating properties. As such, it commanded a very high price and was generally reserved for the wealthy. As the popularity of ginseng rose, more and more collectors were harvesting entire populations of ginseng leaving nothing behind to self-seed. Unlike many common plants, ginseng has specific cultural requirements for it to become established. It prefers moist calcareous protected rocky hill sides with a moderately dense overstory of deciduous hardwood trees to provide plenty of shade. It is a slow growing perennial herb and it takes approximately two years before it can set seeds. For the root to reach a marketable size it may take three to six years depending on growing conditions. However, its high market value has lead to its decline due to over harvesting. For every pound of dried ginseng root, approximately 250 plants need to be harvested. To put this into perspective, the New Hampshire Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) has confirmation of only seventeen sites in New Hampshire with each site containing fewer than eighty plants.

The state of New Hampshire defines "Wild ginseng" as "ginseng growing or grown in an uncultivated state or harvested from its natural habitat. Wild ginseng includes ginseng that was introduced to or propagated in its natural habitat by sowing ginseng seed or transplanting ginseng plants from other areas and performing no other standard ginseng horticulture practices."

To ensure the survival of wild ginseng, growers and dealers interested in selling or distributing cultivated ginseng are required to obtain a license from the **NH Department of Agriculture, Market & Foods, Plant Industry Division**. The following information is provided as a quick reference guide for licensing of cultivated ginseng. This information does not apply to harvesting of wild ginseng.

- **If you wish to grow, sell or distribute cultivated ginseng, please refer to [Section 1 – Licensing of Growers](#) on the following page.**
- **If you are a dealer and wish to sell cultivated ginseng, please refer to [Section 2 – Licensing of Dealers](#) on the following page.**